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Message Text

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51
ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 (ISO) W
---------- 056637
P R 071625Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3809
INFO USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJECT: NIKOLAIS DANCE THEATRE

USIA FOR ILA

REF: PANAMA 1483; STATE A-9348; STATE 057300

1. THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE (INAC) HAS NOT PROGRAMMED THE NIKOLAIS DANCE THEATRE FOR ANY PERFORMANCE IN PANAMA. NOR, AT THIS DATE, DOES IT APPEAR INTERESTED IN DOING SO. POST DISCUSSED THE MATTER SEVERAL TIMES WITH INAC OFFICIALS WHO HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR ORIGINAL POSITION (SEE PANAMA 1483) THAT THEY COULD CONSIDER A SINGLE PERFORMANCE ONLY AND THAT THEY COULD NOT AFFORD A FEE OF $3500. INAC REPORTED HAVING TALKED IN THIS VEIN TO ALEJANDRO SZTERENFELD, THE IMPRESARIO, DURING HIS FEBRUARY VISIT AND AGAIN IN THEIR REPLY TO HIS LETTER OF FEBRUARY 18. INAC HAS NOT RECEIVED AN ANSWER TO ITS LETTER. (THE SZTERENFELD LETTER DID NOT CONFIRM PERFORMANCES IN PANAMA (SEE STATE 57300.) IT SIMPLY REITERATED THE AVAILABILITY OF THE NIKOLAIS GROUP AND REDUCED THE ORIGINAL TWO PERFORMANCE FEE TO $6500.)

2. RECENTLY IN MANAGUA, SZTERENFELD AND THE INAC OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS (CP'S) DISCUSSED THE MATTER BUT ONLY BRIEFLY AND WITHOUT COMING TO ANY AGREEMENT REGARDING FEE AND NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES. THE INAC OFFICIAL SAID HE THOUGHT TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION LATER
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BUT MR. SZTERENFELD DID NOT APPEAR AS EXPECTED. SZTERENFELD

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SPOKE ALSO TO THE POST'S CAO IN MANAGUA TO THE EFFECT THAT HE
COULD NOT CONSIDER A SINGLE PERFORMANCE NOR A FEE BELOW
$6500 FOR TWO PERFORMANCES AND ASKED IF THE EMBASSY COULD USE
ITS OFFICES TO HELP PERSUADE INAC TO ACCEPT THE
TWO-PERFORMANCE VISIT. BACK IN PANAMA INAC REAFFIRMED ITS
POSTION AND AWAITED A REPLY FROM THE IMPRESARIO.

3. WHILE THE NIKOLAIS MATTER REMAINED PENDING INAC PROCEEDED
TO PROGRAM OTHER CP'S INCLUDING THE SENEGAL BALLET FOR TWO
PERFORMANCES ON MAY 20 AND 21 FOR A FEE OF $2000 PER
PERFORMANCE. THESE PRESENTATIONS DAMPENED INTEREST IN
PROGRAMMING NIKOLAIS ON THE GROUNDS THAT INAC COULD
NOT EXPECT MORE THAN AN AVERAGE HOUSE FOR NIKOLAIS,
A GROUP, HOWEVER OUTSTANDING, IS LITTLE KNOWN IN PANAMA,
FOLLOWING SO CLOSELY ON THE HEELS OF TWO PERFORMANCES OF
THE VERY POPULAR SENEGAL BALLET. INAC ALSO EXPRESSED
DOUBT THAT IT COULD HANDLE TWO SUCH GROUPS IN THE SPAN OF
A SINGLE WEEK, A VIEW THE EMBASSY DOES NOT QUITE UNDERSTAND
SINCE, JUST LAST WEEK, BOTH THE GADES BALLET AND THE OKINAWA
FOLK DANCERS PERFORMED WITH BUT ONE DAY IN BETWEEN.

4. THAT THE NIKOLAIS DANCE THEATRE WILL NOT PERFORM IN
PANAMA IS REGRETTABLE. FAILURE OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE
IMPRESARIO AND INAC IS DUE TO SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING
CONCERN ABOUT PERFORMANCE COSTS, DOUBT LOCALLY ABOUT THERE
BEING SUFFICIENT AUDIENCE POTENTIAL TO WARRANT TWO PERFORMANCES,
THE FINANCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF OTHER CP'S AND, ABOVE ALL,
LACK OF CLEAR, SUFFICIENT AND EARLY COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
THE IMPRESARIO AND INAC.

5. ON JANUARY 2, JUST THREE DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF THE FIRST
MESSAGE ON THIS SUBJECT, THE EMBASSY INFORMED INAC WHICH
RESERVED THE MAY 23 AND 24 DATES PENDING COMMUNICATION WITH
SZTERENFELD. THE FIRST WORD DID NOT COME UNTIL SZTERENFELD'S
BRIEF VISIT ON FEBRUARY 7. SZTERENFELD LEFT PANAMA
WITH THE NIKOLAIS PRESENTATION IN PANAMA ENTIRELY UP IN THE
AIR. AND SO IT HAS REMAINED.

6. WHILE THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT INAC MIGHT HAVE
EXERTED MORE EFFORT IN MAKING THE NIKOLAIS VISIT POSSIBLE,
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IT ALSO BELIEVES THAT MR. S. SHOULD HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH
INAC BEFORE HIS VISIT EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE
EMBASSY (AS A-9348 STATED HE WOULD). BUT MOST IMPORTANT
HE SHOULD NOT HAVE LEFT PANAMA WITHOUT MORE ENCOURAGING
SIGNS FROM INAC AND, SINCEHE APPARENTLY WAS AWAY FROM
HOME BASE MUCH OF THE TIME (CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA) SHOULD HAVE
MADE PROVISION FOR FOLLOWING UP ON HIS FEBRUARY 18 LETTER.

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7. POST IS CONCERNED THAT THE FOREGOING WILL PREJUDICE
DEPARTMENT AND IMPRESARIO UNFAVORABLY
TOWARDS INAC. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS
CONCERNING LINES OF COORDINATION FOR PROGRAMMING CULTURAL
PRESENTATIONS TO PRECLUDE SIMILAR DISAPPOINTMENTS IN
FUTURE.
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